

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 NRC-05 /099 W
-----098616 151633Z /45

R 151543Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9133
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION GENEVA
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 13064

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM SALT MBFR
SUBJECT: WANING SUPPORT FOR CURRENT DIRECTIONS IN
ARMS CONTROL

SUMMARY: WE DETECT, FROM TALKS WITH, AND STATEMENTS
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BY SEVERAL BRITISH-BASED EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF
DEFENSE AND DISARMAMENT, A GROWING DISENCHANTMENT WITH
CURRENT PATTERNS OF ARMS CONTROL. THE PRESENT SALT AND
CTB NEGOTIATIONS RETAIN SUPPORT, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE
A WIDENING CONSENSUS THAT NEW APPROACHES ARE NEEDED IF
ARMS CONTROL IS TO PROCEED ANY FURTHER. IN PARTICULAR,
THERE IS SERIOUS DOUBT EXPRESSED WHETHER SALT III OR

MBFR CAN PROSPER IF CONDUCTED ALONG CURRENTLY PROJECTED LINES. BASED ON AN ADMITTEDLY LIMITED SAMPLING OF EUROPEAN OPINION LEADERS, WE FIND THAT ARMS CONTROL IS GRADUALLY BECOMING HERE, AS IT ALREADY HAS IN THE U.S., AN INCREASINGLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE. WE SUGGEST THAT THE CENTER PIECES IN THE WESTERN APPROACH TO ARMS CONTROL--SALT AND MBFR--MAY NOT RECEIVE IN THE FUTURE THE SORT OF LARGELY UNCRITICAL PUBLIC SUPPORT IN BRITAIN THEY HAVE ENJOYED TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

1. CHRISTOPH BERTRAM, THE YOUNG WEST GERMAN DIRECTOR OF THE LONDON-BASED INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES (IISS) RELEASED LAST FRIDAY A NEW PAPER WHICH CONTAINS CRITICISM OF CURRENT PATTERNS OF ARMS CONTROL OF A SORT WE HAVE HEARD FROM OTHERS HERE RECENTLY. ENTITLED "ARMS CONTROL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE: ELEMENTS OF A NEW APPROACH," BERTRAM'S PAPER ASSERTS THAT "THE INSTRUMENT CHOSEN TO EFFECT ARMS CONTROL IN BOTH SALT AND MBFR--THAT OF A QUANTITATIVE RESTRICTION OF NUMBERS OF MEN AND WEAPONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST--IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE. THE TOOL NO LONGER FITS THE TASK. UNLESS WE CAN DEVELOP A BETTER TOOL, THE TASK ITSELF MAY FALL INTO DISREPUTE."

2. OTHERS HERE HAVE COME TO SIMILAR CONCLUSIONS, INCLUDING HEDLEY BULL, THE AUSTRALIAN DISARMAMENT EXPERT
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CURRENTLY AT OXFORD, AND LAWRENCE FREEDMAN, WHO HEADS THE STRATEGIC STUDIES PROGRAM OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (CHATHAM HOUSE). BERTRAM ALSO OWES SOME OF HIS IDEAS TO RICHARD BURT, AN AMERICAN WHO WAS WITH HIM AT THE IISS UNTIL TAKING UP HIS PRESENT EMPLOYMENT WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES.

3. THESE LONG-TIME PROPONENTS OF ARMS CONTROL HAVE EACH CONCLUDED THAT THE CURRENT APPROACH, DEFINED AS THE EFFORT IN SALT AND IN MBFR TO SET, THROUGH FORMAL AGREEMENT, DETAILED AND PRECISE LIMITS ON A WIDE SPECTRUM OF ARMS AND THEIR USES, HAS PLAYED ITSELF OUT. THEIR CRITIQUE CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

- NEGOTIATIONS OF FORMAL AND DETAILED ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS HAVE NOT AND CANNOT KEEP PACE WITH TECHNOLOGY OR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES.
- THE EFFORT TO FIND AND FORMALIZE PRECISE LEVELS OF PARITY BETWEEN INHERENTLY DIFFERENT FORCE STRUCTURES, POSTURES, AND DOCTRINES HAS BROUGHT THESE NEGOTIATIONS TO A LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY WITH WHICH THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS NOT AND CANNOT BE EQUIPPED TO DEAL.
- THE SALT AND MBFR NEGOTIATING PROCESS ACTUALLY

STIMULATES THE ARMS RACE BY DRIVING EACH SIDE TO
ENLARGE ITS STORE OF BARGAINING CHIPS, TO MAINTAIN WHAT-
EVER LEVEL OF PARITY THE AGREEMENTS MAY DEFINE, AND TO
INCREASE SPENDING IN AREAS NOT COVERED BY THE AGREEMENTS
IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SUPPORT FOR THE PROCESS FROM THE MILITA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 13064

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4. EACH OF THESE CRITICS SEEM IN ACCORD THAT SOME
SIMPLER METHOD OF DEFINING AREAS FOR ARMS CONTROL

CONSTRAINTS AND SOME LESS FORMAL, LESS DETAILED
APPROACH TO SECURING AGREEMENT IS NEEDED IF ARMS CONTROL
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IS TO PROGRESS ANY FURTHER. BERTRAM, CITING THE ABM
TREATY AS A MODEL, SUGGESTS THAT EAST AND WEST SHOULD
SEEK EXPLICITLY TO SET LIMITS NOT ON SPECIFIC WEAPONS
SYSTEMS OR TROOP LEVELS, BUT RATHER TO BAN OR CONSTRAIN
THE CAPABILITY TO PERFORM CERTAIN MILITARY MISSIONS
(E.G., FIRST STRIKE, SURPRISE ATTACK, ETC.) WHICH ARE
AGREED TO BE DANGEROUS OR DESTABILIZING. FREEDMAN,
LOOKING BACK TO ARMS CONTROL IN THE PRE-SALT ERA, CALLS
FOR A RETURN TO EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE RESTRAINT BY EXAMPLE
AND TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF LESS PRECISE, LESS FORMAL ARMS
CONTROL AGREEMENTS. HEDLEY BULL ADMITS THAT HE HAS NO
ANSWER. THE ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS IN CIRCULATION
TODAY ARE THOSE WHICH, HE SAYS, HE AND OTHERS ORIGINATED
20 YEARS AGO, OR MORE. HE SUGGESTS THAT A NEW
GENERATION (E.G., BERTRAM, FREEDMAN AND BURT) MUST COME
UP WITH THE CONCEPTS NEEDED FOR TOMORROW.

5. THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO WHY THIS COINCIDENCE OF
VIEW ON THE STATE OF ARMS CONTROL HAS EMERGED HERE AND
NOW. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH
CURRENT PATTERNS OF ARMS CONTROL STEMS LARGELY FROM
THE DELAYS IN REACHING A SALT AGREEMENT. THOSE WHO
FOLLOW THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE FRUSTRATED AND PROBABLY
NOW BORED WITH THE INTRACTABLE CRUISE MISSILE AND
BACKFIRE ISSUES. IF, THEY WONDER, IT TAKES FIVE YEARS
TO MOVE FROM THE AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE AT VLADIVOSTOK
TO A NEW SALT TREATY, HOW MUCH LONGER WILL IT TAKE TO
ACHIEVE THE MORE AMBITIOUS OBJECTIVES SET FOR SALT III?
ANOTHER FACTOR STIMULATING THIS NEW CONCERN WITH THE
PROCESS OF ARMS CONTROL IS THE FACT THAT ISSUES OF
DIRECT AND VITAL CONCERN TO THE EUROPEANS ARE JUST
BEGINNING TO BE DEALT WITH IN SALT AND MBFR, AND WILL
COME MORE TO THE FORE AS THESE NEGOTIATIONS PROGRESS.
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6. COMMENT: WE HAVE REPORTED THESE VIEWS AT SOME
LENGTH NOT ONLY FOR THEIR INHERENT INTEREST, BUT FOR
THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH THEY COULD HAVE FOR THE WIDER
POLITICAL DEBATE IN EUROPE (AND THE U.S.) ON ARMS
CONTROL IN THE YEARS TO COME. IN BRITAIN, THIS NEW
SKEPTICISM REGARDING ESTABLISHED PATTERNS OF ARMS

CONTROL HAS ACHIEVED LITTLE RESONANCE IN THE PRESS, THE POLITICAL PARTIES, OR THE BUREAUCRACY. BUT THE GROUND MAY BE FERTILE. LAWRENCE FREEDMAN RECENTLY PUT FORWARD HIS THESIS, CITED ABOVE, AT THE ANNUAL SEMINAR CHATHAM HOUSE HOLDS FOR SENIOR FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS. HE WAS, HE TELLS US, SURPRISED AND A BIT SADDENED BY THE ALACRITY WITH WHICH NOT ONLY DEFENSE, BUT ALSO THE FOREIGN OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES ACCEPTED HIS RATHER PESSIMISTIC ASSESSMENT OF THE VALUE OF SALT AND MBFR. BERTRAM'S RECENT PAPER SPARKED A SYMPATHETIC EDITORIAL IN THE LONDON TIMES THE DAY IT WAS RELEASED. A CONSERVATIVE BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE RESPONSIVE TO SUCH CALLS TO REEVALUATE THE WESTERN APPROACH TO ARMS CONTROL, AND EVEN A NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT, WITH NEW FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERS, MIGHT SHOW INTEREST.

8. AS SALT MOVES FURTHER INTO THE "GREY AREAS" AND AS MBFR PROGRESSES CLOSER TO SOME SORT OF CONCLUSION, ARMS CONTROL WILL NATURALLY BE SUBJECTED TO GREATER SCRUTINY IN EUROPE. OPINION LEADERS SUCH AS BERTRAM, BULL, AND FREEDMAN ARE FAR FROM OPPOSED TO ARMS CONTROL, INDEED, THEY ARE PART OF ITS NATURAL CONSTITUENCY. THE DANGER EXISTS, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR VIEWS COULD BECOME PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS IN THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO ARE SO OPPOSED. TO DATE OPPOSITION HAS FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS. BUT UNLESS MOMENTUM CAN BE RESTORED TO SALT, AND TO THE GENERAL PROCESS OF DETENTE, THE FUTURE MAY SEE WANING

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SUPPORT NOT ONLY FOR ELEMENTS OF SPECIFIC ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS, BUT FOR THE WHOLE PROCESS, AS CURRENTLY CONCEIVED.

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